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A

L E T T E R

TO THE

Right Hon. EDMUND BURKE,

In REPLY to his

“ REFLECTIONS on the REVOLUTION
“ in FRANCE, &c.”

THE SECOND EDITION;

WITH

CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS.

INCLUDING ALSO

VARIOUS PASSAGES

From Mr. BURKE's former PUBLICATIONS.

By a MEMBER of the REVOLUTION SOCIETY.

Vox audita perit, Litera scripta manet.

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P R E F A C E.

THE author of the following letter wrote it under the fullest conviction, that Mr. Burke was not under any of those apprehensions which he affected to feel when he sent his pamphlet to the press.

Either Mr. Burke believes that men of much more weight in the nation than any members of the Revolution Society, have entertained dangerous designs against the peace and good order of the government, or he has been actuated by those motives, which the

author has ventured to impute to him, in the close of his letter.

Of the Constitutional Society, all the author knows is, that the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Sheridan, Sir Cecil Wray, and many other gentlemen professing to be the friends of Freedom, attended it a few years ago.

To his Readers he most earnestly recommends the perusal of Mr. Burke's Thoughts "On the present "Discontents." They will find that when he published that work, he conceived the French, that is, the late government of France, to be, "the professed Enemies "of the Freedom of Mankind." He also begs them to peruse all his political Tracts, and particularly his Speech on the Reform of the King's Household, &c.—In page 68, there is a passage exceeding in incivility any thing to be met with in Doctor Price's Sermon, he begins—"Kings are naturally Lovers of

“low Company.” To any man who has had the honour to be presented to his Majesty, or to live in the world, the whole passage will appear in the highest degree ungenerous and unjust, as much so as it would be to dispute the title of the Prince of Wales, to the character of the best-bred Gentleman in Europe.

November 6, 1790.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

S E C O N D E D I T I O N .

MANY Gentlemen who have done the Author the Honour to speak of the following Letter in favorable Terms, have observed, that it would be more complete if the several Passages in Mr. Burke's former Publications, to which the Author alludes, were inserted.—This has been done in the present Edition.

The

The Public will recollect, that the Resolutions of the Revolution Society, to which Mr. Burke so often alludes, were passed on the 4th of November, 1789. Since that Time, the very decided Majority by which Mr. Fox's Motion for the Repeal of the Test Act was negatived, and the general Concurrence of the Nation in the Propriety of that Decision, must convince every rational Man, that the Dissenters have lost Ground in the last Year.—Mr. Burke cannot, therefore, dread the Dissenters.

November 26, 1790.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

EDMUND BURKE.

S I R,

I AM one amongst the thousands in this nation, who waited with impatience for your long-promised Letter, and I have read it over more than once with the utmost attention. Had it been merely confined to the affairs of France I should not have troubled you with a single observation, but when we are so plainly told, that there is a body of men in this country, who wish to introduce amongst us the same dreadful confusions, which have so long prevailed in that miserable kingdom, then, Sir, it is proper that every man who loves our Sovereign Lord the King, and venerates the British Constitution, should be upon

B

his

his guard ; and if he has hitherto kept bad company, it is full time to quit them, as you seem to have done some of those with whom you have associated.

I have been for some years a member of the Revolution Society, and had the honour to be one of the Stewards a few years ago, when Mr. Pitt was in the zenith of his popularity. Bred a member of the Church of England, I had no curiosity to attend to a political discourse from a Dissenting Minister ; but at, and after dinner, there has always been much decent and social mirth.—Our toasts were truly loyal and constitutional, and we had one amongst others, which, if general report deserves credit, is invariably omitted in two societies to which you belong.—We, Sir, never separated without drinking a bumper to our beloved monarch, George the Third.—I have heard, that this popular toast is not given either at the Whig Club, or at the Annual Westminster Meeting.

Admitting, that last year Dr. Price stepped far beyond the line of prudence and propriety ; or believing that his sermon does not contain the sentiments of one in a hundred of the people of England ; nay, more, doubting whether a majority of the members of the Revolution Society coincided with him in opinion, although the resolutions which he moved after a good dinner, met with an unanimous concurrence, let me ask you where is the indi-

individual, or even the body of men, whose conduct is not at times tinged with absurdity? And let me say, Sir, in behalf of the Dissenters, with many of whom I have had much communication, that they are a sober, pious, honest, and conscientious community. They have been marked of late years at least for their consistency.—I hope and believe, that the four, levelling spirit, which formerly animated them, does not generally exist amongst them at the present moment. You, Mr. Burke, have agreed with them formerly in many points.—*They* opposed, with their utmost zeal, that mad and destructive war, which brought this nation to the brink of ruin.—Do you blame them, because *they* too well remember, *what it is for your interest the whole world should forget?* There is a consistency in their conduct, which I in vain look for in your's, or amongst some of your connections.—When, by your own confession, every source of taxation was exhausted in this kingdom, and when by the declaration of your friend, Mr. Fox, peace alone could save the country, the Dissenters, as a body, supported the Minister, who made that necessary peace. The Dissenters, as a body, reprobated that monstrous arrangement, by which not only impunity, but remuneration was insured to the Minister, who had so often smarted under the lash of your satire, whom you had so often threatened with the vengeance of an insulted, exhausted people, whom you had so often pledged yourself to call to an account for his actions, *by impeachment.*

The Dissenters, Sir, could not see your union with such a Minister (of whom, if they had a bad opinion, Mr. Burke did more to instil that bad opinion into them than any other person in the world) without withdrawing all confidence from you in future.—Were they singular here? Did they not think with a very decided majority of the people of England?

How honourably did *they* act in the next great event that happened in the country.—Having no means of information superior to the generality of their countrymen, they were with them deceived by the representations made by Mr. Burke, of the oppressions committed by the British government on India. But when the mask was thrown off, when it was palpable that these representations were made to facilitate the passage of a bill through both Houses of Parliament, which was to create a fourth estate in the country, and to perpetuate the late Administration in their offices, the Dissenters acted with a most decided majority of the people of England. His Majesty was enabled to dismiss you from his service, and by a proper exertion of a most valuable prerogative, to dissolve that Parliament, which would have restored you to power, contrary to the sense of the King and his people.

When Providence afflicted his Majesty with a severe indisposition, what was the conduct of the Dissenters? Those who had seats in Parliament supported their true and lawful Sovereign.—Their
Clergy

Clergy offered up fervent prayers to Heaven, for his recovery.—The Dissenters, as a body, agreed with a prodigious majority of the people of England.—The Revolution Society did the same.—*What did the Whig Club ?—What did Mr. Burke ?* Is it not a notorious fact, that both were leagued with a powerful party, who had planned a complete change in the Administration of the government and the removal of those Ministers whom the King had appointed, and the people approved ? I enter not into the heart of man, but judging from events that happened under my own eye, I may venture to declare, that your feelings for the state of our Sovereign Lord the King, and of his amiable, afflicted Consort, were of a different nature indeed from those which you have expressed for the fallen majesty of France.

Shall I, Sir, who was a witness to the conduct of the Dissenters upon these great and trying occasions, give them no credit for the good they did, because it is possible, that some of them entertain speculative and absurd notions relative to another country ? or, shall I suspect them of a design to involve this country in confusion, because in their zeal against despotism they have applauded the conduct of those who have destroyed it in France in one shape ; though many good men fear, that it will rear its head in another infinitely more horrible ?

To the act of opening a correspondence with the actual government of a foreign nation, without the express authority of the government under which

we

we live, I was not a party, having been absent in the last year.

But I recollect the time when you did an act, in my opinion, more justly reprehensible, and surely as much against law.

You boasted in the House of Commons, in the year 1781, that you had opened a correspondence with Dr. Franklin, and were actually negotiating the exchange of Mr. Laurens for General Burgoyne; yet Dr. Franklin, whatever were his merits, was, by the law of the land at that time, a rebel; as such he was deemed by the House of Commons, whose authority you would now support to an extent that would be highly oppressive. Thinking with you, as to the folly of the American war, and the ruin it has entailed upon this country, I must still allow, that it was the war of the House of Commons; and if many of the high doctrines which you promulgate in the book before us are true, then I repeat, Sir, that your correspondence with Doctor Franklin in 1781, was infinitely more reprehensible than that of the Revolution Club with the National Assembly in 1789. You have heretofore written upon the discontents of the people, and have not always imputed them, in my opinion, to the true cause; now it suits your argument to describe them as prosperous and happy. Will you, after these deviations from *yourself*, allow nothing for a too forward zeal in the Dissenters?

You

You have very much mistaken the nature of the Revolution Society, if, indeed, such a name can with propriety be given to that meeting of which alone I am a member. The invitation is general—there are a certain number of stewards appointed each year—these issue an advertisement, inviting *all gentlemen* who wish well to the principles of the Revolution, to dine at the London Tavern, where, for seven shillings and sixpence, they get a good dinner; as much sherry, port, and punch as they like; hear some very good songs, and separate generally well pleased with each other, and contented with that government, under which they enjoy a degree of civil and religious liberty, unknown to any other. But as this sort of advertisement brings together one hundred and fifty, two hundred, and this year, I believe, nearly three hundred gentlemen, there must naturally be shades of difference in many points, which an Englishman thinks he has a right to discuss as often as he pleases; but every person present each year that I have attended, was animated with the purest sentiments of love and loyalty to the King, and seemed to feel the blessings he enjoyed under his mild and auspicious government.

Thus much, Sir, for the nature of our Society.

I have read, and with horror and indignation, the account which you have given us of the dreadful 6th of October, 1789; I have so much charity, as to believe that no society of gentlemen, with

whom I have had the honour to associate, could have opened a correspondence with men, who approved the proceedings of that day, had they really known at the time what horrible excesses were committed. I am still to learn that the National Assembly did approve those proceedings. I will go a step farther; I still doubt, whether the facts be true or not, to the extent you have stated them, and I do so, because I have no dependence upon your veracity, for plain and obvious reasons; I was one amongst some thousands, who a few years ago heard you in Westminster Hall give a detailed and particular account of many cruelties inflicted upon certain natives of Bengal, by the order of a man called Deby Sing.

It has since been proved, by the most unquestionable evidence, that many of the cruelties, and those in particular which it was most offensive to modesty, and to common decency to mention, never were committed at all.

Since the publication of your Pamphlet it was the subject of conversation between two gentlemen of considerable talents—the one had been in France during the summer; the other for many years in India.—The first declared, that he should pay no credit to what you had said of Mr. Hastings, because he could convict you of many errors in your French accounts—the other expressed equal distrust of the facts mentioned in your book, because he
knew

knew your ignorance of a country that he himself had long resided in.

How do I know, that deceptions have not been practised upon us, as to the affairs of France, similar to those which you played off in Westminster Hall ?

The Dissenters are a sober and dispassionate people ; they are in the habit of examining subjects very closely ; and they, in common with a majority of the people of England, have kept their eyes upon the story of Deby Sing, as the criterion by which the integrity of Mr. Burke was to be *judged* hereafter.

Borne down and oppressed for a time by the power of his prosecutors, and conceiving that a Parliament *could not* be dissolved before it closed a criminal trial which *in its youth it began*, Mr. Hastings took no notice of this story of Deby Sing in the first year ; but early in the second, he prayed his prosecutors to bring it forward in such a manner as he might be enabled to refute it. Upon that occasion, you, Mr. Burke, did affirm, that you would offer evidence upon it ; and you did so in the following year : but I never yet met with a man of so muddy an understanding, as not to discover at a first glance, that there was not a single allegation preferred by the late House of Commons to which any thing relative to Deby Sing could ap-

ply—You had been told so a year before, both in the House and out of it. The result was clear—the Lords determined without the hesitation of an instant, that no evidence, as to Deby Sing, was admissible, because nothing that had a reference to him was charged in the articles.

The line for an honest man to take was obvious. You should have gone to the Commons—you should have told them, that you had opposed the prayer of Mr. Hastings's petition formerly, because you thought evidence could be received on the business of Deby Sing, upon the articles as they stood; but as the Lords had determined otherwise, a regard to your own honour, and to the earnest request of the defendant, compelled you to lay matters before the House, to induce them to adopt a new article. Is there one amongst the men differing from you, with whom you have taken such liberties?—Is there one amongst those who agree with you, who does not in his conscience believe, that you would have done what it was your duty, at all events to do, had you not had the fullest conviction in your own mind, *that the strictures passed upon you were founded in truth?* Had you not known, that many of the facts which you stated, as if they had been proved and established by evidence, *never were committed at all;* and that for those that did happen, human ingenuity could not affix blame upon Mr. Hastings.

When-

Whenever a body of men, or even an individual, shall be accused by you, of violating every principle of humanity, the public will be cautious how they give credit to your descriptions—The man who has so often deceived them, may well be suspected of practising deceit upon them in future.

The conclusion you draw* from the conduct of the French, I deny most solemnly—I deny that “the glory of Europe is gone for ever, or that we shall no more behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex—that proud submission—that dignified obedience—that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom.”

This passage I admire for its sublimity.—In point of composition it is most masterly ; but in point of fact, it is not true.—Have you so soon, Sir, forgot events that so recently occurred in our own country ? Did you never witness the tender, the affectionate solicitude of all ranks, degrees, and ages, during the illness of our beloved Sovereign, which occurred but a few months before the French Revolution ? Have you never seen the crowds that filled each day the Levee Room at St. James’s ? Have you never marked the anxiety upon the countenances of thousands, to whom it could be of no consequence whether Mr. Pitt, or Mr. Fox was the

* Page 113.

Minister? If you had any other attraction to the theatre than Mrs. Siddons, have you not witnessed the bursts of loyalty which proceeded from all ranks of people, and how impotent the attempts to impede them in their course, while “God save the King” resounded from every side?—Was there any want of attention to our amiable Queen in the trying hour of difficulty and distress?—A competent majority of both Houses of Parliament spoke the sense of ninety-nine out of a hundred of the people, amongst whom I include *all the Dissenters*, who loved their Sovereign Lord the King, though they had no cordial regard for his Minister, Mr. Pitt.—However ferocious the great and the little vulgar may have been in France, this land the Almighty in his great providence will, I trust, long preserve, famous as it is at the present moment, for love and loyalty to the King, and for an ardent zeal in the support of civil and religious liberty.

Nor were these generous and affectionate feelings confined to our own country—My respect for the King of the French (as they now call him) is considerably heightened by a recollection of the solicitude which he expressed for our Sovereign.—All Europe felt for our Father and our King.—America, which you once denominated the first commonwealth upon earth, forgot its prejudices, and prayed for the recovery of a good man and a good King.—India mourned at his illness, and rejoiced when his health was restored.—The Princes, the Sovereigns,

vereigns, and the people, who have told the British nation, that men ignorant of their laws, manners, and customs, have impeached the man it should have rewarded, sent, by the first opportunity, their congratulations to the foot of the throne ; and one considerable merchant amongst them, gladdened the hearts of many, whom folly or misfortune had subjected to the miseries of a prison, by liberating them from a loathsome confinement.—Such was the conduct of the habitable globe, when a King, who has invariably made the laws the rule of his action, and upon whose private character malice itself cannot affix a stain, was restored to health, and to an affectionate and grateful people.

The distresses which the Sovereigns of France, and the aristocratic families have sustained, no man, not even Mr. Burke, can feel for more than I do.—But can I forget to what these distresses are owing ? that they had their origin in a breach of faith, and that the seeds of liberty were first sown across the Atlantic, where a rooted enmity to England induced the King to send his soldiery, as contrary to every principle of that sound policy which should actuate an arbitrary Monarch, looking to his own security, as to justice ? When I reflect upon this circumstance, and that our last debt of one hundred millions is as much owing to the treachery of France, as to the imbecility or misconduct of your friends, I can look calmly into facts, through that high-sounding

language in which you have cloathed them, and can distinguish between the late Government of France and the People.

I am not surprized that Lord North so long doubted, as to the reality of a Treaty between France and America, foreseeing as he did, that such a Treaty was big with ruin to a despotic state, but if in the end it shall overturn that Government, which by your own account “ was the professed enemy to the “ freedom of mankind,” the event is most fortunate indeed, for France and for Europe.

To this country it is of little moment, whether the people of France resisted without sufficient provocation, or whether their National Assembly have acted absurdly or unjustly. They may say, that nineteen out of twenty of the inhabitants are with them—they may say, that they had no first principles to resort to—that many centuries had elapsed since they could boast of any constitution at all, and that when they had one, it was very defective.—The Dutch formed a constitution entirely new, in the sixteenth century.—The Americans, the first commonwealth in the world, by your own account, have done the same now. There is, in fact, no government in France at present ; but is it to be supposed, that they will not succeed in forming a constitution, because they have hitherto been involved in difficulties arising from the magnitude of their public debt ? The subject

ject is indeed of consequence, if our own happy establishment, both in church and state, were endangered by the conduct of our neighbours.—But God forbid, Sir, that the English should be composed of such contemptible materials, as rendered them unfit to discuss any topic. Why do we love our own government, as established by law? Because we believe it to be the best in the world; and the madness of France, if she be as you represent her, will confirm us in that opinion. Our neighbour's house has long been on fire, but we need no engine to play upon our own, because it is composed of materials that fire cannot penetrate.

Are we not indebted to the virtuous struggles of our ancestors, for the most perfect freedom that any nation under Heaven enjoys at the present moment? The rankest Tories in the kingdom—those who shall most loudly applaud the high doctrines, which for the first time in your life you have maintained, will allow, that the government of Charles the First was an oppressive tyranny previous to the civil war. I admire in common with a majority of my countrymen, the present government of the church; and long, long may the church flourish. But do I wish to see that ecclesiastical oppression restored, under which the people groaned before the grand rebellion? Granted, that the despotism of the long Parliament, and of Cromwell, was more grinding than the comparatively milder tyranny of the First Charles; it is
still

still very generally allowed, that to the resistance of those days we owe our present happy constitution, which, after all, was not fixed, but by a second revolution in the government.

I will neither follow you nor Dr. Price through a long inquiry into the nature of the rights which we acquired at the Revolution ; but this I affirm, that there is not a single point in which the Members of the Whig Club and of the Revolution Society do not agree. The Princes of the Brunswick line have made the laws their rule. It would be treason to doubt that they will continue to do so. Every good subject therefore owes allegiance to the King, and will support him with his fortune and his life. But, Sir, though there is not one of the King's prerogatives that I would touch, and for an admirable reason which your friend Mr. Fox has assigned, because they are a trust for the people's good, and have ever been conscientiously exercised by His Majesty for that laudable end, let me ask you, if every part of our constitution is so perfect, that no improvement can be adopted? There are points upon which the best and the wisest men in England have materially differed. The Minister and Mr. Fox, the rival fans, agree with Dr. Price, that the inadequate representation of the people in Parliament is a serious grievance; some very sensible men think that Parliaments should be triennial; others, annual—I think at present with you, that neither the mode
of

of returning Members to Parliament, nor the period for which they are sent there, should be altered ; but there can be no danger in agitating these points. Many arguments may be urged by such men as Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, which have never yet occurred to my mind, and which may convince me that the people are robbed of their rights, when a noble Earl can send a fiat to a Yorkshire borough, to manufacture Mr. Burke into a Member of Parliament. They may persuade me, that it is both absurd and unjust to allow a Baron Bold, to place Mr. George Harding behind the Treasury Bench, by sending half a dozen footmen into a corn field on the day of an election, before they serve up his Lordship's dinner. Are we made of such miserable materials, that we cannot venture to consider fairly and fully the conveniences and inconveniences of the present mode of representation, because France is convulsed to its centre ?

You well know, Sir, that Mr. Pitt imputed the loss of America, and the alarming amount of our National Debt, to the corruption of Parliament, and that corruption he traced to the inadequate representation of the people in Parliament. You who talk so loudly *now* of our *affection for Parliaments*, traced our misfortunes to the same cause, the corruption of the Houses of Commons. Yet now we are so prosperous, and so happy, that the dissenters are criminal for adopting upon this important subject, the sentiments of

the first men in the nation, in point of rank and talents.

Could I think that wiser, better, or more virtuous men, if such are to be found in the nation, would be returned to Parliament, than those who are in it at present, by the adoption of Mr. Pitt's plan (what Dr. Price's may be I know not) I would certainly vote for it.—Were the spirit of an act now upon the Statute Book, carried into effect, it would, in my humble opinion, do more real service to the country, than any plan yet proposed. I would have no man a Member of the House of Commons, who did not, bona fide, possess ten thousand pounds in money or land; and the moment he had less, which could easily be discovered, it should incapacitate him from remaining in the House.—It requires a certain fortune to be the director of a trading company, and members of Parliament ought to be more independent than any people in the kingdom.

There is no part of your book which surprizes me more than the new-born zeal and affection displayed in it, for Parliaments; possibly you may have admired at all times the institution of the House of Commons; but of this I am sure, that there is no man in this kingdom who has treated the material part of that House, the Majority, with such sovereign contempt as you have done, for a long series of years. I pray you to read over what you say of the

House of Commons in your “ Thoughts on the
 “ present Discontents.” Have you no recollection
 of your opinion of the House of Commons through
 every stage of the American War ? Did you nevertell
 Lord North, that he would carry on that war “ as
 “ long as he could find money to bribe Gentlemen to
 “ say they believed him ?” Did you not once tell Mr.
 Pitt and Mr. Dundas, that they had proposed, and
 the majority that they had adopted, a scheme “ that
 “ would have disgraced the infamous reign of Nero ?”
 Allow me to say, Sir, that you over-rate the affection
 of the people for Parliaments ; and permit me to say
 also, that no man in the kingdom has done so much
 as yourself to induce the people to look with less ve-
 eneration upon the proceedings of Parliament, than
 they formerly did.

This monstrous system of iniquity which you im-
 puted to Mr. Pitt, in the last Parliament, you traced
 to a very extraordinary source, to the Minister’s wish
 to repay the friends of Mr. Atkinson for bringing
 Members into the House. But as circumstances
 change, men change also ; and when Mr. Pitt
 mounted you upon your favourite hobby-horse, you
 discovered, by one glance, that we were a prosperous
 and a happy people—averse to changes of any kind
 —and fondly devoted to Parliaments.

I should be very glad to ask Mr. Burke, what
 events have lately happened to make us, in his opinion,

so prosperous, and so happy? If there was cause for discontent twenty years ago, that cause has been considerably increased. Many years have elapsed since you told us that we were ruined, beyond redemption gone, and that the Head of the Minister could alone satisfy you for the miseries he had brought upon the country. Subsequent to that declaration America has been totally lost; some of our West-India Islands surrendered to the French; and if India were in the miserable state that you have described it, we can draw no resources from that country. Is that farce of reform which you proposed in 1780 less necessary now, than it was then? Have not the Excise Laws been most alarmingly, though necessarily extended? Is not every luxury, every comfort of life, taxed to its utmost bearing? Can we eat, drink, walk, ride, or even enjoy the light of Heaven, without encountering a public collector? Could Doctor Price alter the nature of man, could he subdue the passions of envy, malice, and detraction amongst politicians, or rivalry amongst nations, he would do a real service to his country, and to mankind. The sort of union which he fondly, and, I fear, vainly expects to see accomplished between Great Britain and France, Mr. Pitt looked to also when he framed his Commercial Treaty; and could it be accomplished, it must inevitably give peace to the world.

Twenty years ago you allowed that the people of this land had real cause to be discontented. To be sure, Mr. Burke, we have prospered exceedingly in
the

the last “ twenty years.”—Our empire is dismembered, we have doubled our debt, we have doubled the national expenditure; and ingenuity is almost exhausted in contriving ways and means to get money from us to supply the necessities of the State.

But that you may not say that I have in any instance acted unfairly by you, I shall bring your present sentiments, and your former sentiments into one point of view, desiring my readers to take notice, that our debt is doubled, and our Empire in the same proportion diminished, between the period of the publication of the two pamphlets.

Page 66 of Mr. Burke's *Reflections* published in 1790—“ The power of the House of Commons, *direct*, or *indirect*, is indeed great, and *long may it be able to preserve its greatness*, and the spirit be-
“ longing to true greatness to the full.”

Page 11 of Mr. Burke's thoughts on the present discontents, published in 1770—“ Against the be-
“ ing of Parliament I am satisfied no designs have
“ ever been entertained since the Revolution. Every
“ one must perceive that it is strongly the interest of
“ the Court, to have some second cause interposed,
“ *between the Ministers and the People*. The Gentle-
“ men of the House of Commons have an interest
“ equally strong in sustaining their part of that inter-
“ mediate cause. However, they may hire out the
“ *usufruct* of their voices, they never will part with the
“ *fee and inheritance*. Accordingly those who have
“ been

“ been of the most known devotion to the will and
 “ pleasure of a Court, have at the same time *been*
 “ *most forward in asserting* an high authority in the
 “ House of Commons; when they knew who were
 “ to use that authority, and how it was to be em-
 “ ployed, they thought it could never be carried
 “ too far. It must always be the wish of an uncon-
 “ stitutional statesman, that an House of Commons,
 “ who are entirely dependent on him, *should have*
 “ *every right of the people dependent upon their pleasure.*
 “ *It was soon discovered that the forms of a free, and the*
 “ *ends of an arbitrary Government, were things not alto-*
 “ *gether incompatible.*”

Page 26 of the same work—“ Any new powers
 “ exercised in the House of Lords, *or in the House of*
 “ *Commons*, or by the Crown, ought certainly to ex-
 “ cite the most vigilant, and anxious jealousy *in a free*
 “ *people.* *Even a new and unprecedented course of action*
 “ *in the whole Legislature, without great and evident*
 “ *reason, may be the subject of much uneasiness.*”

Page 83 of Mr. Burke's Reflections, published in
 1790—“ I shall only say here, in justice to that
 “ old-fashioned Constitution, *under which we have*
 “ *long prospered*, that our Representation has been
 “ found perfectly adequate to all the purposes for
 “ which a Representation of the People can be de-
 “ fired, or devised. *I defy the enemies of our con-*
 “ *stitution to shew the contrary.*”

Page 83 of Mr. Burke's *Reflections* published in 1790—"Whilst they are possessed of these notions, it is vain to talk to them of the practice of their ancestors, the fundamental laws of their country, the fixed form of a constitution, whose merits are confirmed by long experience, *and an increasing public strength and national prosperity.*"

Page 56 of Mr. Burke's *Thoughts on the present Discontents*, published in 1770—

"The Court Party resolve the whole *into faction.*
 "Having said something before upon this subject, I shall only observe here, that when they give this account of the prevalence of faction, they present no very favourable aspect of the confidence of the people on their own government.---They may be assured, that however they may amuse themselves with a variety of prospects for substituting something in the place of that great and only foundation of government, *the confidence of the people,* every attempt will but make their condition worse.---When men imagine their food is only a cover for poison, and when they neither love nor trust the hand that serves it, it is not the name of the roast beef of Old England, that will persuade them to sit down to the table that is spread for them. When the people conceive that laws and tribunals, *and even popular assemblies, are perverted from the ends of their institution, they find in these*
 "names

“ *names* of degenerated establishments, only new
 “ motives, was to discontent.”

Page 67 of the same work—“ The virtue, spirit;
 “ and essence of a House of Commons consists in its
 “ being the express image of the feelings of the na-
 “ tion. It was not instituted to be a controul upon the
 “ people, as “ *of late has been taught by a doctrine of*
 “ *the most pernicious tendency.* It was designed as a con-
 “ troul for the people.

Page 68 of the same work—“ But an addressing
 “ House of Commons, and a petitioning nation, an
 “ House of Commons full of confidence, *when the na-*
 “ *tion is plunged in despair*; in the utmost harmony with
 “ Ministers, *whom the people regard with the utmost ab-*
 “ *horrence*; who vote thanks, *when the people calls upon*
 “ *them for impeachments*; who are eager to grant when
 “ the general voice demands account; who in all dis-
 “ putes between the people and administration, perse-
 “ vere against the people, who punish their disorders,
 “ but refuse even to inquire into the provocations to
 “ them; *this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things,*
 “ *in this constitution.* Such an assembly may be a
 “ great, wise, awful senate, *but it is not to any popu-*
 “ *lar purpose,* an House of Commons.

Page 100 of the same work—“ Indeed, in the
 “ situation in which we stand, with an immense
 “ revenue, an enormous debt, mighty establish-
 “ ments; Government itself a great merchant and a
 “ great

Stuarts, and even of the Tudors, the Commons kept a strict guard upon the purse of the people; and James the Second, bigotted, tyrannical, and absurd as he was, left the nation unincumbered with debt. Whether the constitution of the Commons was altered by an increase of the monied interest, or the minds of men underwent a change from the period of the Revolution, I know not; but the fact is, that every succeeding Minister has obtained without difficulty (with few and trifling exceptions) as much money as he chose to ask for; and I believe there is not a country in the world in which the public treasure has been so profusely squandered as in England, beginning with the immense sums which our destructive wars have cost, and carrying it through all the gradations, until I come to the thirty-five thousand pounds which the people have paid for the entertainment you have afforded them three years successively in Westminster Hall.

And this, Mr. Burke, brings me to the consideration of a subject which, I assure you, has made so deep an impression upon the People of England, that it will not be eradicated from their minds, even by the many valuable truths contained in the book before me.

Is there a man who seriously reflects upon the Impeachment of Mr. Hastings, who, with all his affection for Parliaments, will say, that our Constitution is not radically defective? And is there a man of
common

common sense, common honour, or common honesty, in the kingdom, who does not reprobate that sluggish proceeding? Is there a Member of Parliament, conscious of the abuse which has prevailed, who will not step forward in support of a law that shall prevent such an abuse in future? Are not the first principles of the British Constitution, is not Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, and the Resolutions of the House of Commons, vitiated by the proceedings upon that trial? And what British subject can say, that he is safe in his person or his property, until a fit remedy is provided? To this trial you have alluded in more than one passage in your book. In the close of it you say, that to consider the affairs of France, “ You have snatched from your share in
 “ the endeavours which are used by good men
 “ to discredit opulent oppression, the hours you have
 “ employed in their affairs.”

I wish to meet you and the whole world in any thing that I shall say on this subject, with fair argument. You have one mode of revenge, which I deprecate. I hope it is not libellous to speak with decent freedom of the acts of a past House of Commons: if it is, you may bring me before the present House. You, who, if to deliver your thoughts to the public, of public men, and public bodies, and public acts, with the utmost freedom, is to be a libeller, have been the most outrageous libeller of the present age; you, I say, may complain of this pamphlet; if you do, I promise you the author

shall not flinch from the charge, but will instantly avow himself.

I will not suspect you of writing so much against the prevalent opinions of France, on account of the admiration which the people of that country have expressed for the character of Mr. Hastings. But in this I pay no compliment to your candour, because the Aristocrates and the Democrats agree most perfectly in opinion relative to the Impeachment ; and they do so, because there was not a Frenchman in any rank, or station in India, during the late war, who did not look upon Mr. Hastings in his public character as their greatest enemy, though they privately respected, and esteemed him.

But, Sir, to compare your conduct with the admirable observations which you have made upon the proceedings of the National Assembly,

Page 188, you say—" Men have sometimes been
 " led by degrees, sometimes hurried into things, the
 " whole of which, if they could have seen together,
 " they never would have permitted the most remote
 " approach."

This is precisely the apology which every fair man will make for the conduct of the British nation in impeaching Mr. Hastings. That Impeachment turned upon the most extraordinary circumstance (as you well know) that ever happened in any country.

Country. I look in vain for any thing similar to it in the National Assembly of France.

You charged Mr. Hastings with a crime in imposing an annual tax upon a zemindar in India during a war, which, by the constitution of the country, and the tenure under which the zemindar held, he had, as the charge affirmed, no right to pay. The whole article, which contained many points, turned upon this one circumstance.

Mr. Fox supported the charge. Mr. Pitt vehemently opposed it; but as the motion was, that something was criminal, and as Mr. Pitt saw criminality in the amount of the fine which Mr. Hastings intended to impose upon Cheyt Sing for his disobedience, these two Gentlemen joined in the general vote, and a criminal charge was afterwards preferred to the House of Lords in the name of all the Commons of Great Britain, which the House did not vote, except in the general way that I have mentioned.

Was it, Sir, let me ask you, let me ask any man possessing three grains of common sense, for the honour and dignity of this nation, that it should arraign a man as a criminal for exercising what he conceived to be a right of taxation, for exercising what the Minister of the country thought to be a right, for exercising it three years successively with the knowledge of a former Minister? Was it, I say, Sir, proper

per to do this, without coming to a specific vote upon that question of right, unmixed with other matter ? Or are we, from a dread of innovation, to apply no remedy that may prevent so great a wrong in future ? What has the National Assembly done that is more strikingly absurd, more alarmingly unjust, than this ?

You tell us in the next page (189)—“ that no country in which population flourishes, and is in progressive improvement, can be under a *very* mischievous government.”

The fact is true ; but allowing it to be so, Mr. Burke, what man living shall be shameless enough to offer an apology for your conduct ?

You are possessed of full, clear, positive, undeniable proof, that Bengal considerably increased in population and agriculture, during the thirteen years administration of Mr. Hastings. Of this I think you had very sufficient proof, when you drew articles which describe the depopulated and ruined state of that country. But you had established the fact by your own witnesses in Westminster Hall, prior to your moving, that the Managers should abandon as many of the articles as they pleased ; “ but without yielding up the truth and importance of any of them.”

However,

However, to put the matter out of all dispute, and that it may not rest solely on my assertion, take the following extract from the members of the trial :

Question to Captain Edwards, *in the first year of a criminal trial*, 20th of May, 1788.

Q. What was the general state of Bengal, Bahar and Orissa, when you left India in 1783 ?

A. It was in a very flourishing state.

Q. Did the natives appear to be happy or otherwise ?

A. They always appeared to be very happy.

Questions to John Shore, Esq. 2d of June, 1790, *the third year of a criminal trial*.

Q. Whether you are well acquainted with the general state of India, and in particular with that part of it which is subject to the government of the East India Company ?

A. I believe I am.

Q. Has not property been more secure, and individuals been less oppressed under the British Government, than under the government of their Nabobs ?

A. I have not a doubt of it.

Q. Are not the Natives more happy ?

A. I believe they are.

Q. Since the year 1770, to the time when you left India, had not the agriculture, population, and the general prosperity of the country increased ?

A. I have recorded that as my opinion, in the proceedings at Bengal, and I now adhere to it.

Now, Mr. Burke, will you allow me to ask you on what principle of justice, your conduct is to be reconciled. Read the articles that you presented to the last House of Commons, and read the evidence by which you supported them. You have asserted, that “the welfare of the natives had been deeply affected, “the interest of the East India Company materially “injured, and the honour of the nation wantonly “violated, by the acts of Mr. Hastings.” You have proved, that he succeeded to that Government when the total revenues were little more than three millions, and that he left it with a revenue of more than five. You have proved that the people were happy, and that agriculture and population had increased. Yet you yourself moved for leave to abandon articles asserting the reverse without giving up *their truth*; and in speaking of France, you acknowledge no country in which population flourishes can be under a very mischievous government. How are these absurdities to be reconciled? or is this not a matter to be agitated in a free country?

Is such monstrous injustice to be tolerated, because France, in resisting oppression, has proceeded to outrage? Defend us from such Tory doctrines, though proceeding from the member of a Whig Club!

In page 230, you tell us—“Justice is itself the
“great standing policy of civil society; and any
“*eminent*

*“ eminent departure from it, under any circumstances,
 “ lies under the suspicion of being no policy at all.”*

If you have not exhausted all your fine feelings in the cause of France, let me, Sir, call your attention for a few minutes to the cause of Great Britain. The quotation I have made ought to be inscribed in letters of gold in Westminster Hall.—But what has been the justice of that Mr. Burke, who has so truly told us what justice is.

An English gentleman had for thirteen years governed the most considerable foreign dominion of Great Britain ; in that period his conduct had been alternately censured and commended, by ministers, and by his constituents ; but at the close of his government, he received the unanimous thanks of his masters, sanctioned by the King’s Ministers, for his long, faithful, and able services.

You saw his conduct in another point of view—you preferred charges against him, which were voted in a manner so perfectly novel, so diametrically opposite to that justice which you so well describe, that though the Parliament is dead that voted them, my respect for the very name of Parliament precludes me from stating all I know, and can prove upon the subject.

The Impeachment, however, such as it was, was voted, and the trial began.—Mr. Hastings possesses
 F the

the rights of an Englishman—Under Magna Charta he was intitled to equal and speedy justice.—In violation of the first principle of the British Constitution (and without such a principle no constitution is worth a farthing) a distinction was set up, which no lawyer will maintain. His prosecutors described themselves, as armed in some degree with the robes of magistracy. If this be sound doctrine, let it be defined hereafter in a statute.

The next right of an Englishman is, to have *speedy justice*, and this right was recognized by the House of Commons themselves, when they declared in 1701-2, “that in all accusations by impeachment, “or otherwise, it was the undoubted right of an “Englishman to be brought to a speedy trial, in “order to be acquitted or condemned.” Such being the declaration of Parliament, it was surely incumbent upon them so to weigh the indictment they preferred, that their resolution should not of necessity be a mere mockery. It was necessary for them so to select their Managers, that useless time should not be expended by the introduction of matter quite extraneous to the indictment. But you took up four entire days in descriptions totally foreign to the impeachment. The trial then began, and proceeded to the close of a very long sessions, with going through one-tenth of the articles. Here, Sir, was a most alarming and dreadful precedent established. When our ancestors in the reign of King William came to the resolution which I have quoted
3 above,

above, did they conceive the possibility of the event that has happened?

A second year of the trial then commenced, and by this time all India was roused in the cause of Mr. Hastings. Equally prosecuted by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox—deprived of all power, and of all possibility of a return to power, still the various descriptions of men, composing the natives of Indostan, did not forget the obligations they owed to him. These testimonials were laid upon the table of the House of Commons—they were quoted by a Member, as the firmest support of the truth of Mr. Dundas's statements, who had described Bengal to be the most flourishing country in India. With all my affection for Parliaments, I must blush and feel for absurdity wherever I meet it. And what could strike the astonished world with so much surprise, as to hear one of the Ministers of the Crown running almost riot in praise of the past and present government of India to a full House, in the same day that you, the delegate of that House, and speaking in their name, had affirmed, in a high court of justice, that the country was ruined and depopulated.

Who is there amongst us, or in France, possessing three grains of common sense, and a still less proportion of common honesty, who must not be struck with indignation, when he reflects, that on the one hand you, the delegate of the Commons, have publicly declared in a court of justice, that

such was the tyranny and oppression practised by Mr. Hastings, for a series of years, upon the natives of Bengal, “that they felt relieved from a weight under which they had long groaned, when he departed;” while on the other, there have been upon the table of the Commons, for two years, attestations from men of all ranks and descriptions in India, in favour of this tyrant and oppressor, as you termed him, affirming, in direct terms, that ignorant and uninformed men had brought false accusations against him—that the competency of this evidence has not been disputed, that its truth has never been controverted, that the channel of its transmission (Lord Cornwallis) is the best voucher for its authority, that it has been referred to in argument, that the House has been called upon to say which they will believe, Mr. Burke or the Minister of India,

Utrum Horum magis accipe;

where two accounts are so manifestly contradictory, both cannot be true. Who is there, I say, Sir, reflecting upon these facts, who does not lament the absurdity into which we have fallen; and who amongst us will not fully subscribe to the truth of your assertion, that men are led on step by step, to acts at which they would revolt, if they saw their whole extent at once? I believe in my conscience, that there are not ten gentlemen in England who would have voted to impeach any man living, had they conceived that his acquittal or condemnation would have been protracted beyond one session of Parliament.

I am

I am very credibly informed, that some of the leaders of the French National Assembly have doubted of the excellence of the British constitution from this single circumstance.—They have said, it must be radically defective, when any body of men professing to prosecute for crimes in a court of justice, shall be so privileged, that they may protract the decision to any period they please ; and where the person accused has not a chance of being heard, unless Heaven should inspire the conductors of his prosecution, those who have an interest in his conviction, with sentiments of justice and moderation.—*They* have observed, that even in the midst of *their* convulsions, they acted upon different principles.—They brought a general officer to his trial, at a time when of all others a fair decision was not to be expected ; and his crime was of a most serious nature to them—obedience of orders, which if his troops had followed him, would have deluged the city of Paris in blood, and prevented what they call a glorious revolution. Yet under such circumstances, and in such a country, this officer was fairly tried, and honourably acquitted.

They have also observed, that not only humanity has been outraged during the progress of this trial, but a mode of speech was adopted, which has seldom been practised even in their motley assembly.—They have said, that there is not an epithet disgraceful to the human character—there is not an expression coarse and illiberal, which, be the provocation what
it

it will, is never used by a gentleman to a gentleman, in the common intercourse of life—there is not an insult poor and unmanly, which has not been applied.—To whom?—to a man doomed for three years successively to hear all the abuse, without the privilege of a reply—to a man, in whose favour the people of Europe, and of India, are united—to a man, against whom they believe nothing criminal can be proved, because nothing criminal has been proved, in so long a prosecution.

These, Mr. Burke, are the sentiments of the leading men amongst the French; for however violent they may have been in some of their proceedings, they have displayed a marked attention to such English gentlemen as curiosity has led to cross the water, since the government has been in their hands, and have communicated very freely with them.

And in this enlightened age, shall we have so much of the old monkish superstition about us, as to be afraid to examine such parts of our Constitution as are really defective, lest we should give an advantage to the Dissenters? What a mistake have I been in for a series of years! I have been told, that though we had the best of Kings upon the Throne, his Majesty had been served by the worst Ministers that ever disgraced a country. That these men for above twenty years followed a plan originally laid down by the Earl of Bute, tending to de-

stroy

stroy that confidence which the people ought to place in their governors, to introduce discord amongst the best families in the kingdom, and utterly to discredit all patriotism, and public virtue. That in the prosecution of this plan these Ministers had so managed or corrupted the House of Commons, that it was merely assembled to sanction their decrees, and to plunder the people of their property. That these Ministers, in order to preserve themselves in power, had attempted to subjugate America, as the first step for the introduction of despotism into England ; but that America, by a just and glorious resistance, a resistance which gave pleasure to every good man, had utterly destroyed so nefarious a plan, though at an expence to England which she never can recover. And where, Sir, do you think I picked up these absurd notions of men and things ? From certain political pamphlets, and parliamentary speeches, which were published by one Mr. Edmund Burke, the celebrated gentleman who now cries aloud, Fear God, and honour the King ; and every good man will go with him so far. But he has unsaid all that he has been telling us for twenty years. We are, we ever have been, a prosperous and happy people. Our Ministers virtuous, wise, and good ; and our Parliaments proudly independent. Faction shall rear its head no more. The French have worked a most glorious change ; and Mr. Pitt may in future repose in security.

Many

Many who were converted by the patriotic language you formerly held, may ask, if it would be very unreasonable in the people to desire a farther reduction of useless, and expensive offices? Lord John Cavendish, of a family proverbially good-natured, and himself the best tempered man in the world, once declared that the King's Ministers who had plunged this nation in such a load of debt, and had exposed it to so much disgrace, ought to pay part of the interest of that debt, by losing their fortunes. After this declaration two of them retired with honours, and sinecures. You, Sir, who are now tremblingly alive all over at the very idea of complaint, or reform, were once the loudest amongst the discontented in England. Shall I make no allowance for men who retain sentiments, even if they should be erroneous, because you who instilled them into the public, have thought proper to abandon them?

The people, as you told us, in the American war, still *respect* that freedom, which they *once adored*. Shall it be deemed criminal amongst us, who still *adore* the goddess, to rejoice because thirty millions of people have a prospect of enjoying life, liberty, and property hereafter? What a perversion of splendid talents has the world beheld in Mr. Burke! The French never had a constitution. Their civil wars were merely the struggles of petty tyrants against a despot. They have at least a prospect of acquiring

acquiring a constitution now, and it is criminal in an Englishman to pray for their success.

And though the breath of complaint has never been uttered against the British Government in India by one of the thirty millions under our dominion, you have discovered that every species of abuse, corruption, and oppression has subsisted for years in that country. Nay, so completely have you shut your ears to conviction, that you will neither give credit to the people themselves, nor to those who have spent their lives amongst them.

The people will, I believe, long retain their affection for Parliaments ; but at times they have very justly, in my opinion, reprobated the conduct of a Parliament.

The House that impeached Lord Somers voted themselves to be infallible. When a Lord told them a plain truth, they voted that he had uttered false, and scandalous expressions. The Grand Jury of Kent presented what the Commons called an insolent and seditious Petition; but when William the Third dissolved them, the public had but one opinion of their proceedings. By what criterion, Sir, shall we judge of Right, or Wrong? or do things change their qualities as you change your opinions? In 1781, the House then sitting would support Lord North, as you said, “as long as he could find money to bribe Gentlemen to say they believed
G “ him.”

“him.” In 1783, “it was the best Parliament that the country had ever been blessed with.” In 1784, the struggle between this best of all Parliaments, and the King, came to a point. They had done all that voting could effect, in order to turn out the Minister; they had addressed the Crown; they had remonstrated; and at length the Appeal was made to the people, under an explicit declaration from you, and your friends, that Mr. Pitt, by the mode he had got into power, had violated the best principles of this constitution. I presume you think so still. The people nineteen to one thought differently; and all the Dissenters did then, what they have done upon every great occasion since the happy accession of his Majesty’s Family to the Crown, they supported his Government. Possibly a recollection of this event may have sharpened your resentment on the present occasion. Shall any man in England be suspected of a want of affection to Parliaments, because he sees much in the conduct of the last House to reprobate? If there is one man who thinks the country possesses resources enough for paying the interest of our debt without extending the Excise Laws, that man must call that extension, a serious oppression. Is there any man, however anxious he may be, as every man must be, that the power of impeachment should ever be retained, who will not agree that it ought not to be abused, and turned to private purposes? Is there any one man who will affirm, that, in the case of Mr. Hastings, that power was not grossly abused? Is there no distinction to

be made between the impeachment of a man for acts which shall be defined, and separately voted, and leaving it to a few persons, to insert just what they please? Is it not a serious oppression, that so powerful a body as a House of Commons should send into a Court of Justice thirteen voluminous Articles, the size of a Half-Crown Pamphlet, and containing three hundred criminal allegations, not one of which they ever read? Is it not a monstrous injustice, that they should have passed the remaining seven in the gross, having merely voted that in each of them there was something impeachable, though a very essential distinction was taken by the leading men in the House as to what that something was? There are not five men in England who will deny these to be most monstrous oppressions, which call aloud for remedy. But there may be many thousands who will give no credit to the facts I state, because they are so enormous, that they cannot believe them to be true, without a very full investigation.

The Parliament that was dissolved in 1784, attempted to change the constitution, that constitution under which we have so long flourished; at least so the people thought. The last Parliament preferred that sort of impeachment, which differed from all others that ever were heard of. It was so multifarious, that the object of their attack was absolutely at the mercy of their managers. There was enough in the budget to last half a century, under such an adept in amplification as Mr. Edmund Burke; and accordingly

every barrier that the constitution had fixed for the security of the subject, was broken down—Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, the Resolution of Parliament, “that every subject of England, under any
 “accusation, whether by impeachment or otherwise,
 “had an undoubted right to be brought to a speedy
 “trial, in order to be acquitted or condemned.”

Possibly, Sir, with a portion of that wit with which you are so amply gifted, you may tell me, that the late House acted up to the *Letter* of that resolution, by bringing Mr. Hastings to a *speedy* trial ;—but the world will agree with me when I affirm, that they acted in direct opposition to the *Spirit* of it, when they allowed it to go on for three years. Dreadful indeed is the precedent ! For such an evil our ancestors did not provide, because no man could have foreseen it, until it happened.

Vain, I believe, will be every attempt to excite discontents amongst the People of England. They are the only Freemen upon the earth ; and they know the value of the blessings they enjoy. If they feel oppression at all, it is that oppression which arises from the weight of their taxes ; of taxes, which no change in the representation can deliver them from. If they feel resentment and indignation, it is from reflecting upon the gross deceits that have at times been practised upon them. It is from reflecting, that men who have for many years called themselves the friends of the people, and were solemnly

lemnly pledged to trace the calamities they had suffered to their true source, in violation of that promise united, with their opponents, in storming the King's Closet, and seizing the Government. The people allow, indeed, that you HAVE given them an Impeachment ; but as the man you selected neither added an hundred millions to their debt, nor dismembered the British empire, that trial has tended more, perhaps, than any other circumstance, to shew the people of what wretched materials, a patriot is composed.

When Mr. Sheridan vainly sounded the trumpet of alarm through the country, and described that many-headed monster Excise to be what it really is, do you conceive that the people did not feel its extension to be a grievance ? Their opinions are not changed. Their zeal for liberty is as strong now as in the time of Sir Robert Walpole, but our debt was then not a fifth of its present amount ; and it is agreed by men of all parties and all descriptions, that the interest upon it must be honorably discharged, and its amount if possible diminished. But why, Sir, do I say this to you, the convert to my fixed opinions ? We are agreed, that the people are happy and prosperous, and that it is the duty of every honest man to support Ministers, unless they act very absurdly indeed.

In the late American war, two very celebrated men wielded the goose quill of controversy :—Doctor Price in support of the Americans, their cause being

ang that of Civil Liberty; Dean Tucker, the Cassandra of Great Britain, in defence of the Rights of his Country, or of what he believed to be their Rights. You, Mr. Burke, thought and acted with the former, and charitably supposed the honest Dean not to write from conviction, but for a mitre. You felt none of those alarms then, that now disturb your repose. But that time was infinitely more dangerous than the present. The Americans were Republicans *on principle*. They had their emissaries every where. They were avowedly supported by men of the first talents and fortunes in the nation. You, “the citizen of a particular state, and bound “up in a considerable degree *by its public will*,”* openly resisted *that will*; because what the *Law* termed a *Rebellion*, you in your private judgement deemed, to be a *Justifiable Resistance*.

The sentiments of the University of Oxford, inspired you *then* † with so much alarm, that you publicly reprobated them in the House, as improper to be instilled into the minds of the rising generation; yet all they contended for was, to preserve the Constitutional Rights of Great Britain; and upon the principles you *now* profess, you ought to have gone beyond that learned Seminary, in the support of Lord North.

Let me trouble you with one more extract, to shew how much your opinions are changed.

* Page 6, of Mr. Burke's Pamphlet.

† In 1776.

Page 128 of Mr. Burke's *Reflections*, published in 1790—"We have real hearts of flesh and blood beating in our bosoms! We look up *with awe to Kings, with affection to Parliaments*, with reverence to Priests, *and with respect to Nobility!*"

Mr. Burke's speech on the reform in the expenditure of the public money, published in 1780, page 68—"Kings are naturally lovers of low company. They are so elevated above all the rest of mankind, that they must look upon all their subjects as on a level; they are rather apt to hate than love their nobility, on account of the occasional resistance to their will, which will be made by their virtue, their petulance, or their pride. It must, indeed, be admitted, that many of the nobility are *as perfectly willing* to act the part of flatterers, tale-bearers, parasites, pimps, and buffoons, as any of the lowest and vilest of mankind can be. But they are not properly qualified for this object of their ambition. The want of a regular education, and early habits, and some luke-warm remains of their dignity will never permit them to become a match for an Italian eunuch, a mountebank, a fidler, a player, or any regular practitioner of that tribe. The Roman Emperors, almost from the beginning, threw themselves into such hands, and the mischief increased every day, till its decline and final ruin. It is therefore of very great importance, (provided the thing is not over done) to contrive such an establishment, as
" must,

“ must, almost, whether a prince will or not, bring
 “ into daily, and hourly, offices about his person;
 “ a great number of his first nobility; and it is ra-
 “ ther an useful prejudice that gives them a pride in
 “ such a servitude. Though they are not much the
 “ better for a Court, a Court will be much the bet-
 “ ter for them. I have therefore not attempted to
 “ reform any of the officers of honour about the
 “ King’s person.”

Whatever the *people* may do, no gentleman read-
 ing this Extract, will think that Mr. Burke looks
 up, *with awe to Kings, or with respect to Nobility.*

The next is “ *affection to Parliaments.*”

Page 92 of Mr. Burke’s speech on the Reform Bill—

“ We have furnished to the people of England,
 “ (*indeed we have*) *some real cause of jealousy.* Let us
 “ have that sort of company, which if it does not de-
 “ stroy our innocence, *pollutes our honour, &c.*

I confine myself here to speeches that you have
 deliberately published yourself; but to any man who
 has at all attended to the public proceedings, it must
 be clear, that from your entrance into public life,
 you supported what is called the popular part of our
 constitution. I believe both Whigs and Tories to
 be true and loyal subjects to the King; but the
 Whigs have undoubtedly endeavoured to conciliate
 the people upon all occasions, more than the Tories
 have

have done ; and, without entering far into your reasoning upon the principles on which the Revolution was founded : I may state what you know to be true, that both Tory Lords, and Commons, at that period were very much puzzled how to reconcile the Revolution, to the high doctrines of passive obedience, and non-resistance which the church had promulgated during the latter part of Charles the second's reign, and the two first years of his successors. I rather think Lord Somers studied more how to appease tender consciences, than how he should reconcile the Revolution to the principles of the British Constitution.

There is not, I am confident, an opinion you have held, a doctrine that you have supported through a long political life, which your present pamphlet does not contradict ; and there never was a politician to whom the *Argumentum ad Hominem* could be applied so strongly as to yourself.

This, however, would not be a ground for animadverting upon your work, if I saw that danger in the Revolution Society which you seem to apprehend. Such of that body as are Dissenters, have been so from father to son for many generations. I have proved to you, that upon all great occasions they have supported the King and the Constitution. Of our Church Government they cannot approve, or they would not be Dissenters. But do their opinions gain ground ? Does their sect increase ? Certainly

not. I believe the reverse is the truth. If they abhor Popery, Slavery, and Wooden Shoes, is our constitution built upon so rotten a foundation that these people may not proclaim that abhorrence in less courtly language than Mr. Burke would use? This country, ninety-nine to one, nay nine hundred and ninety-nine to one, is devoted to a Monarchy as limited by law, at the time of the Revolution. But in speculative points the differences of opinion are great. The Ministers of George the First would have limited the Peerage. The Minister of George the Third would have altered the Representation. The first struck at an important prerogative of the Crown, the last would have destroyed what the wisdom of ages had sanctified. I see no danger at all from the fair discussion of any subject whatever, that wars not with virtue and religion.

You allow that the French Revolution is an event upon which no man can look with indifference. Shall we not rejoice in this country, when that sort of change is made by which a community is freed from the disgrace of holding their lives and fortunes, possibly at the discretion of a Valet de Chambre, or a Waiting Maid? Shall we be surprized that men who have burst such bonds asunder, shall for a time lose liberty in licentiousness? Or shall we wonder, that, reasoning upon events, of which the best informed amongst us have bad information, Englishmen should think and speak very differently? Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Courtenay, avowedly differ

differ with you upon this point ; and so I believe does every Gentleman who professes to be the friend of rational liberty.

Miserable, indeed, is the description which you have given us of France. Miserable are the descriptions which you have given us of our own country. Have you, Sir, totally forgotten every former occurrence of a long political life ? I will not teize you by many quotations. I will, however, venture to give you two, that the world may know what your opinion was of the British Minister, and of a British Parliament, less than six years ago.

“ Let no man hereafter talk of the decaying energies of nature ; all the acts and monuments in the records of peculation, the consolidated corruption of ages, the patterns of exemplary plunder in the heroic times of Roman iniquity, never equalled the gigantic corruption of this single act. Never did Nero, in all the insolent prodigality of despotism, deal out to his Prætorian guards a donation fit to be named with the largesse showered down by our Chancellor of the Exchequer * on the faithful band of his Indian sepoy.”

Why, Sir, there is not a sublimer passage than this in the book before me.

* Mr. Pitt.

Again you say, “ Your Ministers * knew when
 “ they signed the death warrant of the Carnatic,
 “ that the Nabob would not only turn all the un-
 “ fortunate farmers of revenue out of employment,
 “ but he has denounced his severest vengeance
 “ against them for acting under British authority.
 “ With a knowledge of this disposition, a British
 “ Chancellor of the Exchequer and Treasurer of
 “ the Navy, incited by no public advantage, im-
 “ pelled by no public necessity, in a strain of the
 “ most wanton perfidy which has ever stained the an-
 “ nals of mankind, have delivered over to plunder,
 “ imprisonment, exile, and death itself, according
 “ to the mercy of such execrable tyrants, the un-
 “ happy and deluded souls, who, untaught by uni-
 “ form example, were still weak enough to put
 “ their trust in English faith.”—*Mr. Burke's Speech*
of the 14th of February, 1785. Printed by Doddsley.

Those gentlemen who happen to differ from you
 as to French politics, may solace themselves by re-
 flecting, that however finely turned your periods
 may be, the people of England will be more
 ready to believe what you shall prove, than what
 you shall say :—for if Mr. Pitt has merited such a
 a character as you have given of him, he is indeed
 the “ Captain-General of Iniquity,” and should be
 hunted out of society.

* Lord Sydney, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, Mr. Grenville, Lord
 Mulgrave, and Lord Walsingham.

And these, Sir, are not the mere rants of an orator; they are your own sentiments delivered to the world in a book published by yourself, after many months consideration. Is it utterly impossible for you to become a few years hence the panegyrist of Mirabeau? Events more extraordinary have happened in my time.

The ashes of the dead have been disturbed in France, as you tell us, to render the clergy odious; “and the Archbishop of Paris has been compelled to fly from his flock, because truly in the sixteenth century the Cardinal of Lorraine was a rebel and a murderer.”

You cannot condemn these Tribunitian contrivances more than I do; but were I to name the man in all Europe who has carried these detestable tricks to the most unwarrantable lengths, I should say it was Mr. Edmund Burke. Have the French raked up the ashes of the dead, that they may oppress the living? So, Sir, have you. When they determined to rob the church, they published the iniquities and the crimes of churchmen as historians, whether truly or falsely, have related them. But you went far, very far beyond the National Assembly. You affixed upon the memory of a man who perished in the cause of his country above twenty-seven years ago a calumny of the foulest nature; and this you did, in order to excite the public indignation against a man upon his trial for acts with which the fact you related had not the most distant connection.

nection. Have the French, in any one instance, acted so unjustifiably? And well indeed may they condemn us, if the authority of the House of Commons shall be so used. What must they say, when they know that a man in their name told a Court of Justice, that the son of the Nabob Meer Jaffier was said to be struck dead by lightning in the calmest and the stillest night, when there was not a cloud in the heavens; and without directly affirming the fact, impressed his audience with the belief that he was not destroyed by lightning, but basely murdered, and that the Commander in Chief, and Mr. Lushington, a gentleman who was killed seven and twenty years ago, had authorized so foul a deed? What shall they say when they are informed, that there are many gentlemen now in England who were in the camp in the night when Meeran was killed? What shall they say when they are told, that Colonel Ironside, an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Burke, was one of the number? What shall they say when they are told, that all these gentlemen affirm in the most solemn manner, that of all the tempestuous nights they have known during a long residence in India, they do not remember a more dreadful storm of thunder and lightning, wind and rain, than poured upon them that night? What shall they say when they are told, that half the tents of the camp were blown down by the violence of the storm, and that not one of them ever entertained a suspicion so dishonourable to the character of Mr. Lushington as Mr. Burke threw out in the name of the House of Commons,

Commons, the first assembly in the world? What shall they say when they are told, that such a suspicion was never entertained by any man in India? And what shall we say to a man who states as a fact, what a hundred witnesses can prove was notoriously false; and follows that false fact by insinuations, that a man so many years deceased was guilty of a foul and atrocious murder?

I protest to you, Sir, I can see nothing in the conduct of the National Assembly more contrary to the first principles of justice, more repugnant to the feelings of a man of honour, or more shocking to humanity, than certain proceedings in the trial of Mr. Hastings, and this foul calumny uttered against the fair fame of the late Mr. Lushington, for the paltry purpose of discrediting a whole body of men, amongst whom Mr. Hastings is but a single individual, exceeds in iniquity any thing you have related against the National Assembly, for their conduct to the church.

You have managed so to purify the House of Commons, by the expulsion of contractors, and by overturning other parts of that monstrous system of corruption introduced by your new friend Lord Guildford, (as *you* say) that you have but one fear remaining.—
 “ All will go well as long as the Breakers of law in
 “ India can be kept from becoming the Makers of
 “ law in England.” It is something remarkable, that after having had the honour and character of
 2 the

the House of Commons at your complete disposal for more than three years, you should never yet have established the truth of the fact, which you assume, as if it was undisputed.

There is one event, and but one, in which the Englishmen who have been in India, whether they broke or preserved the laws there, took a very active and successful part : and that was, in opposing with their utmost industry that system, which they firmly believed to be yours, and which was condemned in the strongest possible manner by the King, by the Lords, *and by the People* ; without whose assistance our gracious Sovereign must have submitted to a domineering Aristocracy. That your zeal should outrun your discretion whenever this subject comes across your imagination, I am not surprized ; and that Mr. Hastings has suffered for the activity of his friends upon that occasion, is now tolerably clear to the whole world. But allow me to tell you, Sir, that the clause which you introduced in your own bill, and which still I see plays before your fancy, was to the full as unjust as any thing you lay to the charge of the National Assembly. *Prima Facie*, the Gentlemen of India have a merit, which those with whom you are leagued cannot boast. They have neither dismembered the empire, nor have they plunged the nation into a debt of such a magnitude, that it is more alarming to national liberty, than any sentiments that may flow from Dr. Price. Composed, as the House of Commons is, many members notoriously

riously the representatives of Dukes, Marquisses, Earls, Viscounts, and Barons, why should any one part of the monied interest of the country be excluded? As far as England is undone, it has been ruined by the Country Gentlemen, who, with the best intentions in the world, supported Lord North in the prosecution of the American war, until a national bankruptcy was apprehended. This fact I state upon your authority, and it is notoriously true.

If a man has property, he has a right to be a candidate for a seat in Parliament. If he has obtained that property by illegal means, let the law lay hold of him. But to throw out these malicious insinuations upon all occasions, to go out of your way to do it, is equally unjust and ungenerous, as it was to threaten Lord North year after year with an impeachment, in order to intimidate him into a compromise. Such conduct, Sir, makes an honest man sick of public life. It has reduced opposition, which always ought be respectable, to contempt.

Your doctrines are exceedingly favourable to a Minister; and as I wish to see a good Government supported, I confess to you that many of them I much approve. But were I to think, as you profess to do of the Ministry, I should entertain a very different opinion indeed. Such doctrines would have made you a Jacobite in the reign of James the Second. Such doctrines cannot be heard with pa-

tience by those who have a bad opinion of the present Minister; or may conscientiously think, as many do, that without touching the prerogatives of the King; or forcibly entering into his kitchen, some parts of our constitution may be improved.

That the Book is calculated to strengthen the hands of that Administration which it has been the employment of some years of your life to pull down, I freely allow.

The doctrine of the Constitution, according to my opinion, is, that his Majesty has a right to chuse, and to dismiss his own Ministers. The doctrine of Mr. Burke, as delivered in a pamphlet, called, “Thoughts on the present Discontents,” was, that the country ought to be governed by a party—by family connections:—that it was so governed in the reign of Queen Anne for many years. This is the true Rockingham Creed; and they acted upon it in 1783, when, being too weak themselves to overturn the King’s Minister, they extended their connection, they did not borrow a majority as the late Mr. Pitt once confessed he had done from the Duke of Newcastle, but they bargained for one, and the price paid was, a division of all the offices of Government, with their bitterest enemies,

Before the nation had recovered from the surprize into which such an union had thrown them, the deed was done. Mr. Pitt has no such combinations to dread

dread in future. His repose in Parliament will not be disturbed, at least by the same persons. New combinations may be formed ; but the Coalition is gone for ever ; those general principles of union, that fidelity of attachment which, as Mr. Sheridan told us, drew applause even from the enemies of Opposition, is ever gone, never to return. Avaunt, ye Whig Clubs ! ye Westminster Meetings ! ye Revolution Societies ! Dare not, I charge ye, Englishmen, again to talk or think of public men, or public measures, lest some amongst you should presume to hint your disapprobation of a Minister's conduct, and to doubt whether you are so prosperous, and so happy, as Mr. Burke represents you to be.

The true cause of the revolution in France you have fairly stated, I think—" Nations are wading
 " deeper and deeper into an ocean of boundless
 " debts. Public debts, which at first were a security to government, by interesting many in the
 " public tranquillity, are likely in their excess to become the means of their subversion. If government provide for these debts, by heavy impositions, they perish, by becoming odious to the
 " people. If they do not provide for them, they will be undone by the efforts of the most
 " dangerous of all parties ; I mean an extensive
 " discontented monied interest, injured and not
 " destroyed, with a debt of above two hundred and
 " forty millions, and taxed in every possible shape."

The real distinction between this kingdom and France before its revolution, is this:—We have run deeply into debt, so deeply, that I believe it was once your opinion, that a national bankruptcy was inevitable. This debt, is the debt of the people, contracted by the adoption of measures of which *they* approved; for whether it be possible or not to amend the representation, this I know, that no Minister can long carry on a war, through the medium of the House of Commons, *contrary to the wishes of the people*. It was the *change* of public opinion, that first made an impression upon a House that had supported Lord North for so many years; and therefore our debt is in no instance to be imputed to his Majesty, nor even to his Minister, unless it can be proved that he deceived Parliament. We have shewn a laudable spirit, to pay honestly and fairly those debts, which we absurdly contracted.—But in France the law was widely different—*their* deficit, the real source of the revolution, arose from the measures adopted by a Monarch, in which *the people had no voice*.—The American war inspired them with new ideas; and *Vive le Roi*, yielded to *Vive la Nation*.

Let the proceedings of the Revolution Society be as absurd as you describe them, they are, as a body, too inconsiderable to attract notice—their committees may correspond with the French; they may drink the sovereignty of the people, or an equal representation, in Bishopsgate Street, while Mr. Fox is toast-
ing

ing the majesty of the people in Covent Garden, without disturbing the decent order, and tranquillity of government. We can have no confidence in men, of whom we entertain no very high opinion.— You cannot seriously believe, that any speculative opinions promulgated *now*, in the hour of our prosperity, will affect us, when the people withstood every art used to inflame them, at a distressful period.

Indeed, Mr. Burke, I must believe, that losing your own memory, you conceive the public to have drank of the waters of Lethe also. Carry your recollection back, I pray you, to the period of the American war—remember the county meetings, corresponding committees, Mr. Fox's Parliament in Westminster Hall, and the resolutions taken at the King's Arms, against “ a wicked and abandoned
“ administration, and a corrupt majority in Parlia-
“ ment.”—Remember the encouragement you received by addresses from different counties, to persevere in your Bill of Reform—remember the confidence placed by many people in a persevering, able, and as they then thought, a virtuous opposition ; and if all these circumstances could not shake an unfortunate, and an indolent Administration, much more produce an innovation in our admirable frame of government ; what in these days of confidence in Ministers, and impassioned loyalty to our Sovereign, can be expected from a few intemperate

rate expressions (admitting them to deserve that epithet) in the sermon of a dissenting minister, almost sinking into the grave, under the weight of years, and infirmities !

What is the honest sentiment of the people of England upon the French Revolution ?—We are sorry, they say, for the fallen state of the King and Queen, and we feel for the distresses of the nobility ; but what business had they to interfere between us and America ? and with these sentiments, they leave them to settle their own government.

I must, therefore, look beyond the cause you have assigned. The Revolution Society, as a body, would not have attracted your notice unless there had been other circumstances, connected with their conduct.

Every man in the kingdom knows the violent part you took in the debates upon the Regency.—I, who have the honour to belong to many clubs in this town, and who have mixed very much with men of all ranks and parties, believe, upon tolerable information, that every step taken by you during that period, was censured by those with whom you acted. You well know the ground you lost with the public, and there must have been some foundation for the reports that we heard of dissensions

tions amongst your friends,* when Mr. Fox left the army without a General.

After the providential recovery of His Majesty, the impeachment (that mill-stone about the neck of your party) was resumed—it was dragged on through the session, commencing with a speech of four days from Mr. Burke, and proceeding with almost daily disputes upon evidence, and continual references to the judges of the land. The ground you and the party lost with the public by this protraction, you were well aware of. The prorogation in 1789, left Mr. Pitt in full possession of power, and opposition as low, in public opinion, as men of their talents could be. On the next meeting in January of this year, a noble Viscount, who moved the address, very imprudently in my opinion, alluded to the confused state of the French government. Here was the favourable moment for you: On the first opportunity you went very fully into the affairs of France, and forced your friends, Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan, (who, “if they have faults to Heaven, have none to you”) to differ from you; the latter with so much vehemence, that it produced as vehement a reply, and a solemn declaration, that you were separated in politics for ever. Could such violence have proceeded from so trifling a cause? The seeds of this ill humour were sown, when both of you were almost at the door of the two pay of-

* New Annual Register for 1787.

fices, naval and military. From that moment all confidence has been at an end. Mr. Pitt, (who acted with political wisdom in so doing) took care to express his sentiments very plainly, and the House and the public went with him. The constitutional language of Mr. Burke was warmly applauded—its inconsistency with all his former opinions was not noticed—and it must have given some satisfaction to the Minister, to see a public difference between Mr. Burke and Mr. Sheridan, on a fundamental point.

You then tried your credit with the late Parliament to the utmost ; on one day you gave notice, that in consequence of some extraordinary decisions in Westminster Hall (by the Judges of England) you should bring forward a motion relative to the trial of Mr. Hastings.

Abandoning every thing of this kind, and without once alluding to those extraordinary decisions, you made two motions ; the first, that the managers should abandon as many of the articles, as they should please ; but without giving up the truth or importance of them—the second, that the House were bound to persevere in the impeachment, until judgement could be obtained upon important articles of the same.

And this dying House of Commons (which had been prosecuting the impeachment three complete years, and knowing, as every individual member did,

did, that it was at Death's door) voted your resolutions, and lived but thirty days longer. Can I prove there was management in all this? Certainly I cannot; but I may conjecture there was, with much more propriety than you conceived that Mr. Pitt ordered the debts of the Nabob of Arcot to be paid, that the friends of Mr. Atkinson might be franked into Parliament.

Good may sometimes be produced by evil.—The impeachment of Mr. Hastings, has been to him, a most grievous oppression—it has deeply affected the first, the vital principle of the British Constitution, by which equal and speedy justice is promised to all; but it has shown to what desperate lengths the spirit of party and injustice will carry men; and those persons who commenced this trial with compliments as fulsome and disgusting the one to the other, as their abuse of the defendant was coarse and unmanly, are now separated in politics for ever. The justice of Heaven is displayed when a man is made the instrument of disgracing those who have dishonoured themselves by supporting him against every principle of reason and common sense. But they have received their fate from the hand that should not have dealt the blow; to you they have been generous to a fault, and they now suffer for it. You, Mr. Burke, have publicly contradicted every principle that you professed through life—your old associates professing to differ from you, feel the discredit that you have brought upon the party, and

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the public, with one voice, exclaims, “ What is
“ patriotifm but a name !”

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